

Avenir VELIKANOV (Venya)
1010 West Green St. Urbana (Graduate dorm.)
Source: K, Urbana

Date : 19 Feb. 1965

Project: K. Urbana Source Report: 1/29

Subject is a Ukrainian from Kiev, and a specialist in Physical Chemistry. He is at the Univ. of Illinois in Urbana. His wife and child are in Kiev. Source describes him as a tall, athletic type, resembling in appearance the actor who played the disabled soldier in the movie "Ballad of a Soldier" but with a fuller face. He was a member of some sports team in Kiev, but Source does not believe it was the "Dynamo".

"Venya", as he is called, appears to be a heavy drinker. Source first met him at a party given by a faculty member, who is of Baltic origin. He was well stewed then mainly on Soviet vodka, which the four students who attended the party had brought. He then insisted that K drink more to show that she is a true Slav, and appeared disappointed when she would not. Several times since then K smelled alcohol on V's breath.

He is a very friendly type but tends to be moody. During the party his moods changed from very mellow to angry, when the slightest provocation occurred. His command of English is halting. Being an athlete, V has tried to play rugby (football) at the university. He is also frequently bowling on the university lanes. He knows many Ukrainian songs and enjoys singing them.

K had three occasions to meet Subject and talk to him at some length. Other meetings were casual when they only met each other in passing and said hello.

1. At the party in late September, shortly after the student arrived in Urbana. When he found out K was Ukrainian, he began to talk to her in a very friendly fashion in Ukrainian, which elicited a joking comment from another exchange student present (Grigori "Grisha" Ilmenkov): "Look at those khakhly talking and propagandizing." (This was said in Russian).

Orig & SR/CG/C

for Ralyma Pomeroy file
Velikanov & Pomeroy
SECRET

Velikanov ...2

During the conversation V pulled out a tourist folder on Kiev from his back pocket and showed it to K. He then insisted that she drink from a bigger glass, when she refused, V waived his hand in disgust and joined another group.

In one of his angry periods at the party V told K that all Ukrainian emigres are pigs. He was scornful of them, said that K like the rest was no Ukrainian and even implied that she must be a girl of loose morals. At other times he was overly friendly and used endearments in addressing her.

The other students at the party were not interested in talking, but in listening to American records, learning how to do the Twist and singing.

Yuri Pirogov periodically intruded on the conversation between K and V.

After the party K said to V she would walk with him because she lives in the same general direction. (In fact they live in the same building, a grad. student dorm). They walked together, and the rest of the students walked a little behind. V said he would like to go on with K to drink somewhere together, but he said he would not do it, because he is afraid of pictures. (He did not explain it any further). By this time it was around 4 a.m. A few blocks from home, V said he would not go in, because he felt very badly, and wanted to walk around a bit to clear up his head. K went in by herself.

The next morning K spotted Pirogov in the lounge of the building. He was studying the residents' directory, and when he saw her appeared disturbed. He asked her whether she too lived in the building.

2. At the Russian Club meeting. All four students were there. They were introduced in turn by Grisha Ilmenkov. K talked with V very briefly, but she could not think of anything important he said. The meeting was in October, 1964.

Velikanov2

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velikanov ...3

3. In the library where K works. She noticed V who had some trouble explaining to the desk clerk what he was looking for. K walked over and quickly cleared up the difficulty, for which V was grateful.

This meeting was around Dec. 1964, when news of the fire in the UkSSR Ac Sciences Library was known. K asked V about the fire. He was apprehensive.

V: "Why do you ask? How do you know about it."

K: "I read about it in the paper."

V: "Are you sure you don't want to tell someone else about it?"

Is it for the radio or newspaper?"

K: "No, I'm just curious."

V then told K that the fire was set by a male employee of the library, who was mentally ill. The employee spent the night in the library undetected and set it afire. V's professor called V in the morning to tell him the news, and apparently V went to the scene of the fire. V then asked K how long she was working that day, and because she was almost finished V walked her home.

The other meetings were only the chance ones and they only exchanged greetings.

Earlier in February, when K returned from her vacations V met her in the lobby of their dorm. He greeted her, said that she seems to be avoiding him, told her she looks a bit under the weather and tussled her hair. K explained that she is nearsighted and does not often wear her glasses, so she might not have seen him around the campus.

A week ago both were in the dorm's TV room watching a movie. V turned around, saw her and greeted her aloud in Ukrainian. But he left before the picture ended and did not talk to her.

Earlier, after the fall of Khrushchev, K said she was surprised to see the students still in the U.S. and asked if there were any changes. "There are no changes. We are still here," said V.

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velikanov4

Around the end of December, K asked V to come with her to her parents home in Chicago for Ukrainian Xmas. V seemed willing, but said he would ask his advisor. (He did not specify who was the advisor). When the time came to leave, V was not in contact with K, and she did not follow up the invitation, so the visit to Chicago did not take place. After Xmas, V told K that the students were in Chicago, Washington, and New York.

K once commented that V's name did not sound Ukrainian. He replied that he was of Russian origin, born in Kiev and that he considers himself a Ukrainian. His Ukrainian language is very good.

At the University's annual International Fair, the Soviet students had a room for the USSR display. The display was very meagre. Ukraine was represented by a few cut-outs from the USSR magazine and a few borrowed records for the phonograph. V explained that they had trouble obtaining more exhibits, although they wrote to the Embassy in Washington and the Mission in New York. Ukrainian booth, set up, over the Soviet students' protest by the Ukrainian-American students apparently made a better showing. The organizing committee resolved the trouble over the protest by deciding that only countries represented at the UN may ~~hold~~ set up the exhibits. Thus the Soviet students set up a USSR display, while Ukrainian-Americans did the same for Ukraine.

(A contrast was provided by the Polish exhibit. There is only one Polish exchange student at the University, but the Polish community of Chicago helped him set up a very large and colorful display. The lone student kept watch over it and acted as the guide.)

Soviet Students at Illinois U.

General (or add to Velikanov)
Source : K

February 20, 1965

Since the incident with Ukraine's representation at the University's International Fair (Ukraine was represented by the emigre students, and USSR by the Soviet exchange students), the visitors seemed to avoid contact with K. This is how she puts it, yet it could only be her impression, because there were other cases since then, when Velikanov sought her out, greeted her, or exchanged a few words.

K noticed also that a Ukrainian emigre on campus, by name of Bakhmet, or something similar, holds long conversations in Russian with these students. They go on long walks and talk. K does not as yet know much more about this Bakhmet.

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